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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000317

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [SNAR](#) [BM](#) [KN](#) [ARF](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA DENIES NUCLEAR OR MISSILE LINKS WITH NORTH KOREA

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I. RONALD K. MCMULLEN.
REASON 1.4 (B & H).

1. (S) SUMMARY: Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win told the CDA, a.i. March 9 that Burma "has no links whatever with North Korea regarding nuclear technology or missile technology," and has no intentions of buying missiles or missile technology from North Korea. He allowed that Burma had purchased some (unspecified) equipment from North Korea previously and that North Korea had offered to sell Burma missiles. "We have no intention of buying any missiles or missile technology from North Korea," he averred. Burma's plans for a nuclear reactor are still on the drawing board, he continued, and "would be for purely research purposes." He said Burma was "not very keen" on reestablishing diplomatic relations with North Korea, and wanted us to know that North Korea would "most likely" attend the ARF inter-sessional group meeting in Rangoon in April. End Summary.

2. (C) Burmese Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win called in the Charge' d'Affaires, a.i. March 9 to "set the record straight regarding media and Congressional allegations" on Burma's relations with North Korea, particularly in two fields: a) nuclear and missile technology, b) narcotics trafficking. MFA's Director General for Political Affairs and the Director of the Americas Division also attended the meeting.

3. (S) The Deputy Foreign Minister got straight to the point, claiming that Burma has "no links whatever" to North Korea in the area of missiles, missile technology, or nuclear technology. "At one point we bought some equipment from North Korea, but actually this has stopped." KMW also revealed that "North Korea offered missiles." He went on to avow that Burma has no intention of buying missiles or missile technology from North Korea. He said Burma's stated interest in acquiring a nuclear reactor is public knowledge, but the process "is still on the drawing board, and in any case would be for research purposes only."

4. (S) Regarding rumored speculation that a North Korean shipment of heroin seized off Australia was evidence of Burmese and North Korean collusion, KMW denied any link between the GOB and North Korean drug running. CDA, a.i. noted that Burmese narcotics police had recently provided a variety of local heroin samples to U.S. law enforcement authorities and that "fingerprinting" processes might help identify the origins of a particular heroin shipment and perhaps help dispel any false accusations.

5. (C) Khin Maung Win said that while North Korea has "made some approaches, we are not very keen to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea." The Deputy Foreign Minister said that Burma had invited North Korea to the ARF inter-sessional group meeting to be held in Rangoon next month purely in the context of ARF membership. North Korea has not yet officially replied, he stated, but a North Korean delegation is "most likely coming." He mentioned this, he explained, so as not to "surprise" the United States on this issue.

6. (C) The CDA, a.i. raised UN Special Envoy Razali's recent visit and pressed for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the other political prisoners. The Deputy Foreign Minister said Razali felt his visit had gone well, but KMW added nothing about a release of ASSK or anyone else. The CDA, a.i. noted that March 12 is NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo's 77th birthday, adding that after such a long spell in prison and now under house arrest, he should be given special consideration. No response from the DFM, but he did smile when the CDA, a.i. threatened to deliver a birthday cake to U Tin Oo's home.

7. (SBU) After exchanging updates on the progress of the joint Opium Yield Survey currently under way in Shan State and the WWII Remains Recovery operation being conducted in Kachin State, the CDA, a.i. gave the DFM a copy of the February 22 Parade Magazine which featured Senior General Than Shwe as #2 in a list of the world's top ten worst dictators. He explained that the magazine was private and that the article was not a statement of USG policy. "Sometimes critical information from Washington, like that in our Human Rights Report, is official, but in this case it was not," the CDA, a.i. said. The DFM thanked the CDA, a.i. and asked him to convey to the Department the GOB's message on

North Korea.

18. (C) COMMENT: The Deputy Foreign Minister's denial of any link between North Korea and Burma in the nuclear, missile, or narcotics fields was about as categorical as possible. Whether it is true or not is another matter. Post is somewhat puzzled by the timing of this meeting, but was glad of the opportunity to discuss with the GOB serious policy matters. End Comment.
McMullen